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The project is aimed at improving the Parliament's functionality and operational efficiency

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Boom or burden?

New study findings urge East African governments to invest in their young people for a better tomorrow

By Evans Chumo

Throughout the East African Community (EAC) region, particularly in Kenya, Rwanda, Tanzania and Uganda, the population is rapidly growing. This growth, factored together with a demographic transition and the sprawling growth of urban centers, is unsustainable.

What are the implications of a youthful population?

Currently, Uganda is the world's second youngest population with an average age of 15.8 years, as 76 percent of its population is under the age of 30 years. Tanzania, similar to Uganda, still maintains an extremely high fertility rate – 5.2 children per woman on average, and its population is expected to more than triple to 189 million people by 2065. Rwanda is urbanising rapidly; at present, more than a quarter of its population lives in cities and its urban population is growing by 6.4 percent annually, which places pressure for new housing and other urban services. It is estimated that more than 53 percent of Rwanda's population will live in urban areas by 2050.

In Kenya, more than 750,000 young people attempt to join the labour market annually, but only about 15 percent of them are successful in securing jobs in the formal sector. Further, those that do find work tend to be engaged in the vulnerable and low-paying informal Jua Kali sector in urban areas, while those in the rural areas are often underemployed, particularly in the subsistence agricultural sector. As a result, the working youth receive wages that are inadequate for their needs and most are often not covered by any social protection programmes.

These and other findings on youth demographics in these four EAC countries are summarised in a new *study report by the African Institute for Development Policy (AFIDEP) and the University of Southampton (UK). The study examined and modelled demographic trends for these East African countries over the next 50 years.

A window of opportunity

However, despite the challenges posed by the magnitude of the region's youthful population, there is still a window of opportunity for the four countries to accelerate their socio-economic development, but only if they make the right investment choices to take advantage of their young people. The first step to harnessing this potential is providing adequate sexual and reproductive health information and services so as to reduce high fertility, and in turn, reduce the current high dependency burden. Fertility is the most influential determinant of population change in most of the countries in the EAC region, such as Uganda and Tanzania, and fewer dependents will bring about an economic benefit for these countries, as the resources that would have paid for education, health, and basic services for large numbers of children can be re-invested for longer-term economic growth and capital development – a phenomenon commonly referred to as the demographic dividend.

Harnessing the demographic dividend has its conditions

Still, the demographic dividend is neither guaranteed nor automatic. This study cites Tunisia and South Africa as notable examples of countries that have failed to maximise their demographic dividend despite transitioning to a population age structure with significantly more people in the working ages than dependents. To maximise the promise of this dividend, EAC countries must also invest in the development of their human capital through policies and actions that expand the education and skills development opportunities afforded to the youth; the provision of an enabling economic environment; and the creation of adequate numbers of decent jobs that will be distributed to the youth and working-age adults without discrimination.

If little is done to alleviate the region's rapid population growth rate, the proportion of young dependents will continue to overwhelm that of productive workers, placing a significant strain on the EAC's resources as these young people still have to be educated, housed, employed and provided with healthcare. Inaction in addressing its youth demographics may eventually threaten the region's security as unemployed, disenfranchised and marginalised youth can cause civil and political unrest. This has already been witnessed in many parts of the world such as in Northern Africa and in the Middle-East with the Arab Spring uprising, which was spearheaded by young people, and whose aftermath has proved more problematic than the conditions that brought it on in the first place.

*The study report is available on the AFIDEP website: <http://bit.ly/2JSEld7>

Facts on East African Youth

Africa's large youthful population has been identified as a significant challenge for development since states - and households - bear the heavy burden of providing for basic services and needs of children and youth, thereby limiting their ability to accumulate savings which could be invested for higher productivity and infrastructure development. The four EAC countries - Kenya, Rwanda, Tanzania, and Uganda - are no different from the rest of Africa, as their populations are also largely youthful. This large population, however, can also be a great source of opportunity for development if combined with the right investments in education, skills development and job creation, among others.

43%

Proportion of Kenya's youth below the age of 15 years

76%

The proportion of Uganda's population below the age of 30 years. Uganda currently has the world's second youngest population

53%

The proportion of Rwanda's population that will be living in urban areas by 2050

**75
THOUSAND**

Number of Kenyan youth that attempt to join the labour market every year. Only about 15 percent secure jobs in the formal sector

**189
MILLION**

The projected population of Tanzania in 2065. Tanzania still maintains a high fertility rate - 5.2 children per woman, the biggest determinant of this projected growth

**2.5
MILLION**

The number of immigrants from the four East African countries in 2015 alone. 35 percent of them were youth between 15-34 years



Botswana is already harnessing the demographic dividend

However, it's also consuming more than it's earning, and needs urgent reforms to maximise the dividend

By Eliya Zulu, Bernard Onyango and Rose Oronje

The conventional narrative of high fertility and high child dependency in Africa is one that does not apply to Botswana. Due to a transition to smaller family sizes over the last few decades, the makeup of Botswana's population age-wise has shifted and today, close to two-thirds of the population is between the working ages of 15-64 years (the average number of children per woman has reduced from 6 in 1960 to 2.9 today). In fact, findings from a recent study - *Opportunities and Policy Actions to Maximise the Demographic Dividend in Botswana* - reveal that as a result, Botswana has been harnessing the demographic dividend since at least 1990.

The demographic dividend refers to the temporary economic benefit that can arise from a significant increase in the number of working-age adults relative to young children and the elderly, resulting from a decline in fertility decline – if this change is accompanied by sustained investments in education and skills development, health, job creation and good governance.

Between 1990 and 2060, the study's results estimated that the cumulative boost in living standards from the demographic dividend stood at 36 percent. Of this, 24 percent has already been accumulated between 1990 and 2015, while an additional boost of 12 percent could be earned between 2015 and 2060. Additionally, the window of opportunity to maximise the demographic dividend has already peaked yet diminishing returns can still be earned through to at least 2050.

This study, whose findings were launched in March by Botswana's Vice President Hon. Mokgweetsi Masisi, was commissioned by the Government of Botswana and supported by UNFPA Botswana and the East and Southern Africa Regional Office (ESARO). The African Institute for Development Policy (AFIDEP) led the technical analysis in collaboration with the Development Policy Research Unit (DPRU) and supported by the University of Botswana.

Is the country living beyond its means?

The study revealed that young Batswana tend to remain dependent until the age of 32. This reflects high levels of unemployment and underemployment of youth and young people below the age of 35. Three to four out of every ten Batswana in this age group are unemployed. The findings challenge the common view that young people get jobs and stop being dependent at much earlier ages in their early or mid-20s.

Furthermore, the country has a uniquely high level of consumption that has produced a huge deficit between consumption and labour income. Batswana aged 0 to 24 consume an equivalent of 90 percent of the total labour income generated in the country. This large deficit as a result of the high consumption is offset by the proceeds of the country's finite mineral resources, particularly the diamond industry. This is likely unsustainable in the long-term, and the country must undertake key policy and investment reforms to create meaningful jobs for its youth. A related study by the World Bank estimated that for Botswana to maximise its demographic dividend, it will have to generate at least 1 million new jobs by 2050.

What can Botswana do to maximise what is left of its first demographic dividend?

Botswana's Vision 2036, the country's long-term development strategy, seeks to graduate the country from an upper-middle-income country to a high-income country with prosperity for all. Given that demographic change has implications for the realisation of this goal, the study's recommendations, if implemented, can propel the country into achieving its 'high-income and prosperity for all' aspirations.

32 YEARS

Young Batswana tend to remain dependent until this age, reflecting high levels of unemployment and underemployment of people under age 35

1 MILLION

Number of new jobs Botswana will have to generate by 2050 for it to maximise its demographic dividend

90 PERCENT

Proportion of total labour income that young Batswana (age 0 - 24) consume

VISION 2036

Botswana's long-term development strategy.

The strategy seeks to graduate the country from an upper-middle-income country to a high-income country with prosperity for all



Specific steps Botswana should take

1. Prioritise economic reforms and investments to urgently accelerate creation of jobs and other well-paying livelihoods for the country's youth

Botswana should enhance its diversification away from the mining industry to sectors with high job multiplier effects such as agriculture. In addition, the country should improve the quality of, and rebrand technical vocation education and training (TVET) as an attractive route for re-skilling the thousands of out-of-school youth who did not make it to tertiary colleges. The study showed that boosting Botswana's job creation capacity for young people could boost living standards of the population by about 20.5 percent between 2015 and 2035.

2. Optimise value for money to create a globally competitive skilled workforce

Botswana is already spending considerable resources on education. However, it is not getting value for money from this investment, illustrated by the under-performance of Botswana students on the quality of learning measures against global benchmarks. The country, therefore, requires a reform agenda that should include revamping the whole education pipeline (including early childhood education, primary school, secondary school, and tertiary colleges) to address all inequities in access and quality bottlenecks, and facilitate the strategic shift from the current knowledge-based to a competency-based curriculum.

3. Reinforce investments in health and family planning to prevent unplanned pregnancies and ensure a healthy labour force

Botswana should reinforce investment in public health to consolidate the progress it has made in improving child and maternal health outcomes and in improving the health and overall well-being of its population through various interventions, including the successful HIV/AIDS treatment programme. The country should encourage health promotion to prevent lifestyles that predispose people to non-communicable diseases, and enhance the capacity of its health system to manage these and other emerging health challenges. Family planning programme should also be strengthened to prevent unplanned pregnancies, especially among adolescent girls and youth. Evidence from the study showed that if Botswana's birth rate remains at 3 births - the current level - until 2060, the cumulative boost in living standards emanating from the demographic dividend will be 9 percent. However, if it sustains or reinforces its family planning programme to prevent unplanned pregnancies, the total fertility rate will most probably decline to about 2.0 births per woman by 2050, and the demographic dividend will provide a cumulative boost to living standards by 19 percent.

4. Strengthen enabling factors for optimising the demographic dividend

In order to lay the foundation for Botswana to be successful in the reforms noted above, the country needs to focus on addressing challenges around governance, efficiency and accountability, gender equity and empowerment of women, environmental conservation for sustainable development, and strengthening data and evidence for performance monitoring and learning.

Botswana must act now

Botswana does not have the luxury of long-term planning to maximise the first demographic dividend. Therefore, the government and all development actors should act with urgency and implement game-changer interventions that will enable the country to take full advantage of the demographic dividend to achieve its long-term development aspirations to become a fully modernised, high-income country.

Parliament of Malawi launches project to enhance its performance

By Rose Oronje



The Speaker of the Parliament of Malawi, Hon. Richard Msowoya, speaking during the launch.

On 28 February 2018, the Parliament of Malawi launched a new project aiming to improve its performance. The new project – the Malawi Parliament Enhancement Project (MPEP), aims to stimulate reforms to improve the effectiveness and impact of parliament in steering democracy, upholding good governance, and promoting socio-economic development in Malawi.

The MPEP project has two main expected outcomes including improved autonomy and functionality, and an enhanced technical capacity and operational efficiency of the Parliament of Malawi in fulfilling its core functions.

While presiding over the launch, the Speaker of the Parliament of Malawi, Hon. Richard Msowoya, said, “I’m happy that we are launching one of the best projects of the Malawi Parliament. As a Malawian, when I look at how we link with the Executive and the Judiciary, I know that there is a lot that needs to be done. We need to tackle the issues that make us uncomfortable. We know that parliament could do a lot if it had legal autonomy, we know that parliament could do a lot if it had budget autonomy, and we also know that parliament could do a lot if it had operational autonomy. This project is an opportunity for us to address these challenges once and for all.”

The project, funded by the Norwegian Embassy, is being implemented over a period of three years, running from

December 2017 – November 2020.

Speaking at the launch, the Leader of the House, Hon. Kondwani Nankhumwa said that “Parliament is a key governance institution that Malawians look to because it represents their interests. Therefore, Parliament requires more capable parliamentarians and a secretariat to deliver its functions beyond expectations.” He added that by addressing the challenges facing political leaders and the Secretariat, the project comes as a complete package that has the potential to comprehensively tackle Parliament’s challenges. “The project needs to harness the different capacities available in the different political parties in Parliament in its implementation.”

The project will be implemented with technical assistance from AFIDEP as the lead technical partner, and the Institute of Policy Research and Social Empowerment (IPRSE).

The Leader of Opposition, Dr. Lazarus Chakwera, thanked the Speaker for initiating a process that will enable Parliament to look at itself critically because this is the only way it will be able to improve its services to Malawians. Said he, “Anything that helps us to do our job better – more efficiently, more effectively, more independently – I commit that this kind of process will receive support from the opposition.” He concluded that “the project is just a catalyst but we are the ones with the political will to address these challenges so that we can serve all Malawians.”

The Clerk of the Parliament of Malawi, Mrs. Fiona Kalemba, was also present at the launch. She said, “this project will transform the way we

do business in the Malawi parliament.”

She added that given the many challenges that they face as a parliament, “there is a need for continuous parliamentary reforms especially because as Parliament we sign annual performance contracts with the government, and these contracts require us to change from doing business-as-usual to focus on results”.

The Norwegian Ambassador H. E. Kikkan Haugen said that the Embassy funded the project because it takes a holistic approach to responding to challenges facing parliament. He added that “this project does not come with all solutions, it comes with suggestions and possible solutions, but focuses on working with (parliamentarians) to jointly find solutions to these challenges. We will be flexible as the project evolves to meet the needs of the parliament.”

AFIDEP’s Executive Director, Dr Eliya Zulu said the Institute is very excited about the project and will work hand-in-hand with parliament and other key partners in supporting project implementation. He concluded saying “Launching this project is not the achievement, the achievement is implementing project interventions to address the challenges that have been highlighted”.

Key points about the Parliament project

- The MPEP project has two main expected outcomes: improved autonomy and functionality, and an enhanced technical capacity and operational efficiency of the Parliament of Malawi in fulfilling its core functions.
- The project will run for a period of three years: December 2017 to November 2020
- The project is funded by the Norwegian Embassy in Malawi, and will be implemented with technical assistance from AFIDEP as the lead technical partner, and the Institute of Policy Research and Social Empowerment

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Why the media is critical to the success of the demographic dividend agenda in Africa

By Diana Warira



For decades, the mass media has shaped the world's view of what is important in our daily lives—our social and political realities—through its ability to influence information and how it is presented. As such, the media has been and still is a powerful tool in shaping our perceptions of what matters in our world today. If used well, this inherent power of the media can be of great value in the prioritisation of the demographic dividend framework in Africa's policymaking processes. The media has the power to raise the profile of the demographic dividend agenda in Africa's development conversations and sustain policymakers' attention.

At any given time, policymakers have several competing policy priorities that may be influenced by their personal interests, opinions, and worldview, not to mention the complex nature of the policymaking process that involves many moving pieces. Media coverage of issues relating to the demographic dividend is critical now more than ever. Despite high-level conversations on the demographic dividend over the past five years, including at the 2017 African Union Summit where African leaders committed to investing in the large youthful population to steer development, there is still worry that the demographic dividend 'hype' may die out if these conversations do not translate into action at the policymaking level.

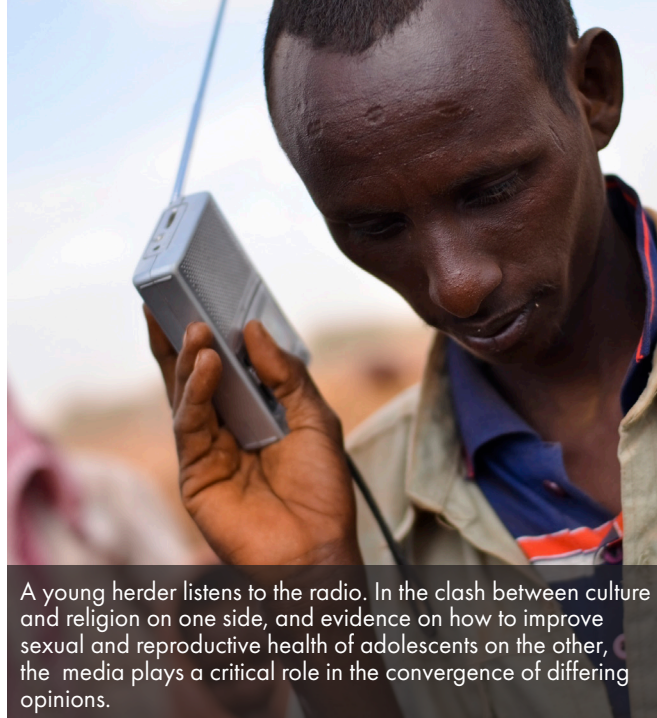
A double-edged sword

The media is a double-edged sword; it can either benefit or curtail the progress of the demographic dividend agenda in Africa. For instance, the experience of experts' engagements with policymakers and other stakeholders on comprehensive sexuality education in Kenya is a testimony to this reality. Comprehensive sexuality education for adolescents and youth is one of the key investments Kenya needs to make for the country to harness a demographic dividend. Evidence shows that comprehensive sexuality education for adolescents reduces unintended pregnancies, sexually transmitted infections (STIs) including HIV/AIDS, and other negative sexual and reproductive health outcomes, which are a barrier to the country's efforts towards harnessing a demographic dividend.

Policymakers in the health ministry have demonstrated greater buy-in on comprehensive sexuality education than their counterparts in the education ministry. The current curriculum on sex education places an emphasis on abstinence with teachers taking a conservative approach that discusses sex as immoral and harmful, as well as not teaching safe sex practices for those who choose not to abstain. While this approach resonates with the cultural and religious views of many, it has not helped reduce the negative sexual and reproductive health outcomes faced by Kenyan adolescents. Evidence shows that an 'abstinence-only' approach does not effectively address negative sexual and reproductive health outcomes among adolescents such as teenage pregnancies, unsafe abortions, and HIV/AIDS infections, among others.

There is a clash, with culture and religion on one side, and the evidence on how to improve the sexual and reproductive health of adolescents, on the other. Religious leaders are particularly opposed to comprehensive sexuality education, as they view it as being too 'explicit' and an agenda that promotes risky sexual behavior as 'healthy and normal.' Some groups have even gone so far as to term this 'a foreign agenda.'

Despite this divide, the media has done very little to alleviate the situation. Instead, media practitioners have adopted sensational reporting, giving those opposed to comprehensive sexuality education more opportunity to air their positions, with very little voice to experts who know what the evidence from research says. In doing so, they fail to use their platform as a means to engage opposing sides for incisive discussions. These discussions could have the objective of laying to rest myths and misunderstandings on what comprehensive sexuality education is, how it can improve the lives of adolescents and youth, and why it matters for national development. This could also provide an opportunity to find a middle ground on how comprehensive sexuality education can be culture- and religion-sensitive. Has the media sustained the sexuality education agenda in Kenya? Somewhat. The occasional coverage has put the subject on



A young herder listens to the radio. In the clash between culture and religion on one side, and evidence on how to improve sexual and reproductive health of adolescents on the other, the media plays a critical role in the convergence of differing opinions.

Photo: Internews Europe / Flickr

the national agenda. But is the agenda moving in the right direction? Hardly. Until the opposing sides can agree, comprehensive sexuality education will remain a thorny issue in Kenya and meanwhile, we shall continue witnessing the rising cases of teenage pregnancies and irresponsible sexual behavior among adolescents and youth.

Now what?

In this tussle between evidence and the strong foundations of cultural and religious values, the reality is that irrespective of how robust the evidence is, cultural and religious objections have to be considered if sexuality education in Kenya is to achieve the ultimate goal of reducing negative sexual and reproductive health outcomes among adolescents and youth. The media has a critical role to play in the convergence of the differing opinions, and this can be strengthened by considering some crucial elements. First, in the context of demographic dividend research, how well does the media understand the role that sexual and reproductive health outcomes play in a country's prospects for harnessing a demographic dividend and achieving long-term development aspirations? If there are knowledge gaps among media practitioners, experts should consider trainings and formal/informal discussions with media practitioners.

Second, is the current framing and terminology helping the cause? The use of the term 'comprehensive' has caused apprehension among groups opposed to sexuality education because as mentioned earlier, these groups believe the content is 'too explicit' and the explicit nature is viewed as being 'deliberate'. Therefore, development experts and media practitioners should put their heads together and identify context-savvy messaging that does not jeopardise success.

Ultimately, the goal is to improve adolescent and youth sexual and reproductive health outcomes, and everybody should work for the good of this generation. As experts continue seeking mechanisms to achieve greater buy-in for sexuality education to be taught to in- and out-of-school adolescents, the media should not be sidelined. Experts should consider reaching out to media practitioners and ensure they are well-equipped to provide factual information to the public. Moreover, media practitioners should also reach out to experts and allow them to discuss the evidence first-hand. The media sets the agenda for the masses, and it needs to be the right agenda. To achieve this, it has to be a collective effort.



Dr. Esmie Kainja,
Principal Secretary,
Malawi Ministry of
Gender, Children,
Disability, and Social
Welfare

Motivations and enablers of evidence use

A conversation with a Member of Parliament and a Principal Secretary in Malawi

By Rose Oronje

We held a training workshop in collaboration with the Population Reference Bureau (PRB) for doctoral researchers on the verge of completing their PhDs and embarking into research careers. Among other objectives, the workshop was aimed at challenging and encouraging these researchers to put policymakers at the centre of their research. One way we did this was to host a panel conversation with two policymakers in Malawi – a Member of Parliament - Hon. Juliana Lunguzi, MP and Chair of the Parliamentary Committee on Health in Malawi), and a Principal Secretary, Ministry of Gender, Children, Disability, and Social Welfare - Dr. Esmie Kainja.

What motivates the two policymakers to consider evidence?

As people interested in strengthening evidence-informed policy-making (EIPM), one of the things we care to understand in-depth is what motivates policymakers to use evidence. Amidst all other competing factors, why would they focus on finding and considering evidence in their work? “When I speak in Parliament, I want the government to listen to me. Evidence helps me to get the government to listen,” says Hon. Lunguzi. She adds that evidence has helped her make strong arguments in Parliament and to challenge some of the suggestions government brings to Parliament because sometimes these are not based on evidence.

Responding to the same question, Dr. Kainja says, “I work in a ministry that deals with vulnerable populations... I use evidence to target resources to ensure that they go to the most in need.” She gives the example of Malawi’s Social Cash Transfer programme, “We have used evidence to ensure we distribute resources to the most in need under the Social Cash Transfer programme”.

“Also, evidence has helped us detect challenges in the programme and address them. For example, evidence has helped

us detect cases of wrong targeting where resources were going to the wrong people, and we have resolved these issues. Without evidence, we would not have been able to detect such issues in the first place.”

The evidence the Member of Parliament needs isn’t necessarily the evidence the Principal Secretary needs

As the conversation progressed, it became clear that the two policymakers need quite different types of evidence, pointing to the need for those of us promoting EIPM to target and provide evidence that speaks to the needs of the different types of policymakers.

“As government officials, we are focused on solving problems in communities, but sometimes research does not provide us with solutions. We need evidence to help us design and implement programmes that solve community problems,” Dr. Kainja said. “Our main sources of data are the Ministry of Finance, National Statistics Office, and planning departments within ministries. But often, these agencies face a lot of challenges in capturing and analysing data that different ministries need. So, support to these agencies will ensure that officials in different government ministries get the data they need to solve problems at community level,” she added.

On the other hand, Hon. Lunguzi says, “Two things – I need to be re-elected, that’s the simple truth. So, I need evidence on my constituency – what are the issues in my constituency and how are these being addressed. With this evidence, I can challenge government programmes and point out where they are failing to effectively address the problems my constituents are facing.” She adds, “I also need evidence that analyses budgets and bills that the Executive brings to Parliament. This is the only way I can be able to scrutinise these in Parliament.”

“I need to be re-elected, that’s the simple truth. So, I need evidence on my constituency – what are the issues in my constituency and how are these being addressed. With this evidence, I can challenge government programmes and point out where they are failing to effectively address the problems my constituents are facing.”

- Hon. Juliana Lunguzi, MP - Malawi Parliament

When does evidence matter for the two policymakers?

“We need evidence most when we’re planning for our activities... when we’re designing programmes,” says Dr. Kainja. She adds, “When you bring evidence when we have already started implementing our activities, then it becomes hard for us to consider it.” This points to the importance of researchers and other evidence producers understanding the planning processes and cycles so that they engage with these at the time when evidence is most needed and therefore, most likely to be taken up.

“We also need evidence most when we’re budgeting to inform how we allocate resources,” adds Dr. Kainja. So, if researchers and other evidence producers can understand the budgeting cycle and the opportunities for evidence use to inform how budgets are allocated, this could increase the chances of evidence being considered in decision-making. For MPs, understanding when parliament is scheduled to discuss and scrutinise budgets and bills is important to inform when evidence is most needed.

For the Principal Secretary, collaborations with researchers is an enabler that cannot be over-emphasised

There is a lot of evidence pointing to the crucial role of collaborations and meaningful relationships between researchers

and policymakers in enabling evidence uptake in policy and programme decisions. Such collaborations also help researchers understand the complexity of the policy-making process, which is important in informing the research they undertake and how they engage the policy process to enable its uptake.

“We would like researchers to collaborate with us when they begin their research, not just come to us with research findings. When you involve us at the start of your research, we can ensure that your research is useful to the problems we are trying to address,” says Dr. Kainja. She adds, “Also, when you involve us in your research even as co-researchers, we understand the research better and you build our capacity to interpret and apply your research in our work.”

Enabling environment

In the conversation with the two policymakers, the critical importance of an enabling environment for increased demand and use or consideration of evidence kept coming up. This was a sign that it’s something that they’ve had to grapple with and it also indicated how much influence environmental factors have on evidence use.

“You know I had my own researcher to find and package for me the information I need to debate in Parliament,” asks Hon. Lunguzi. She adds, “I’m lucky because I have a technical background in health and so I’m able to find the evidence I need because I know where to find it. But other MPs are not as lucky as I am, and so it is very difficult for them to contribute to the debate in Parliament.”

The Malawi Parliament only has 6 researchers tasked with supporting 21 parliamentary committees and 193 MPs. These researchers are too few and therefore, unable to meet the demand for evidence in Parliament.

Dr. Kainja says, “Often our planners in ministries lack the high-level capacities needed to analyse and provide the evidence that we need for decision-making. Also, the infrastructure supporting data gathering and analysis in the ministries is very weak. For instance, in the Ministry of Gender, donors have helped us develop an integrated information system, but this system remains weak due to lack of resources and so the information it generates is often incomplete.”

Hon. Lunguzi adds, “The other thing I find funny is that the Standing Orders in Parliament do not allow us to use Google while in plenary. Yet, I think if MPs were allowed to Google information as the government presents their proposals, this would improve the debate on these proposals.”

She argues that MPs are often short of time to find and read on government proposals before these are tabled in Parliament, and so allowing MPs to search for information online while these proposals are being presented in Parliament is important to improve the quality of debate. Adding to this, Dr. Kainja says, “For us, even the Internet itself is a problem. We have very poor Internet connectivity at the Ministry and so searching for information that we need online is often not an option.”

For the two policymakers, politics is ever-present in their work and the decisions they make. They argue that while sometimes evidence helps them challenge political interests, other times political leaders deliberately choose to ignore evidence in favour of political positions and interests.



Photo: Albert Gonzalez Farran - UNAMID/Flickr

Opportunity seized or squandered?

The African Union's 2017 theme focused on harnessing Africa's demographic dividend. But just how well did the theme do in inspiring action towards making the investments needed to realise this dividend?

By Eunice Mueni

Africa, in general, is a very young continent. About 40 percent of the population is below 15 years of age, and an additional 30 percent fall between 15-24 years. This demographic profile presents a unique opportunity to achieve massive socio-economic transformation through harnessing the demographic dividend.

The African Union (AU) and its partners recognise the opportunity presented by the demographic dividend and have embarked on various initiatives to operationalise the demographic dividend paradigm as the central framework for accelerating socio-economic development on the continent. As such, the continent's Agenda

2063 endorsed the demographic dividend as a key framework for achievement. Agenda 2063 seeks to transform Africa into an "integrated, prosperous and peaceful Africa, driven by its own citizens and representing a dynamic force in the global arena." The agenda acknowledges the role of population dynamics in this transformation and specifically seeks to unleash the full potential of youth and women to help boost socio-economic development. Key among the AU's initiatives is the 2013 African Regional Conference on Population and Development, under the theme "*Harnessing the Demographic Dividend: The Future We Want for Africa*," which focused on the role of population dynamics in the socio-economic transformation of the continent. Several other meetings and events

were organised in furtherance of the African demographic dividend agenda, including an African Demographic Dividend Leadership Seminar in Abuja in 2016, the Accra conference on **“Realizing the Demographic Dividend,”** and a high-level symposium on Demographic Dividend and Africa’s Development in Dakar in 2016.

Roadmap for harnessing Africa’s youth dividend

These efforts culminated into African heads of states and governments declaring the 2017 AU theme — **“Harnessing the Demographic Dividend through Investments in the Youth.”** The AU and its partners in 2016 launched a roadmap for harnessing the demographic dividend, which contained key deliverables and milestones to guide the member states and the Regional Economic Communities (RECs) on concrete actions that can be undertaken in order to achieve the bold aspirations of Agenda 2063.

Designating **“Harnessing the Demographic Dividend through Investments in Youth,”** as the 2017 theme for the African Union meant that countries should have critically reviewed and analysed the diverse opportunities and challenges presented by their youthful populations under the four roadmap pillars. These include access to health particularly sexual and reproductive health, education and skills training, employment and entrepreneurship opportunities, and their role in advocacy, governance, and political spheres. Countries were then expected to design, review, and update strategies - where they exist - in addition to judicious implementation in order to translate the current highly dependent youthful population into a skilled and economically productive workforce. Ultimately working towards transforming the continent into an economic powerhouse.

Did African countries benefit from the momentous opportunity presented by the demographic dividend as the theme for 2017?

Although it is still too early to call whether the opportunity presented by the 2017 theme was seized or squandered, it is crucial to acknowledge the achievements made and challenges that lie ahead.

Several countries have undertaken studies to estimate the magnitude of the demographic dividend. Developing demographic dividend profiles is an important step in identifying country-specific opportunities and challenges in harnessing the demographic dividend. Further, a few of these countries developed roadmaps to domesticate the AU roadmap, including Kenya, Ghana, and Nigeria. Uganda and Zambia have integrated the demographic dividend principles into national development plans, while Kenya has gone as far as estimating the cost of implementing the roadmap. Several other events and high-level meetings have been held to share country level and continent-wide progress, including the 29th AU Summit in July 2017, which affirmed its commitments to the theme of the year.

Implementation faced by many challenges

Despite these efforts, there is no available evidence of tangible actions that translate these commitments and roadmaps into implementation programmes. Thus, to a large extent, harnessing the DD still remains a mirage, with many challenges curtailing its implementation. Many countries are still grappling with how to roll out the roadmaps, the best approaches to integrate roadmap

and national development plan/strategy priorities, as well funding sources for the roadmap activities. These challenges are partly related to limited capacity in policy prioritisation analysis among government agencies on what they can do immediately, in the medium, and long-term; and a silo approach that has crowded out multi-sectoral planning and implementation culture. Adopting a systems thinking and integrated planning; approaches that help tackle complex issues while at the same time offering opportunities for scale and sustainability will help bring out the inherent linkages, relationships, interactions, behaviors and synergy between population and development. Another challenge is limited political will, particularly in supporting access to sexual and reproductive health services among young people, specifically contraceptives and comprehensive sexuality education (CSE). Limited access to sexual and reproductive health services contributes to high teenage fertility, leading to high school drop-out rates among girls. This has resulted in large disparities in education enrollment rates and formal labour employment rates between men and women.

Involvement of multiple stakeholders is critical

However, these challenges are not insurmountable. Concerted efforts and coordination among multi-sectoral stakeholders to marshal resources, both human and financial, will set the tone for achieving the demographic dividend. Governments will require a lot of technical assistance in policy prioritisation and integrated planning. Thus, the private sector, experts, and development partners should consider supporting the development of planning, implementation and monitoring tools, and work on engineering economic performance and job creation. This is because the private sector plays an important role in creating adequate and decent jobs for the huge youthful workforce, which eventually translate to high income, better living standards and more investments in human capital development. To increase political support for young people accessing sexual and reproductive health information and services, there is a need for continuous advocacy on investments and policy implementation and engagement of young people in the formulation and implementation of policies and programmes. This will ensure that young people have access to information and services to live healthy lives and avoid unwanted pregnancies which derail them from achieving full economic potential. Although financing demographic dividend roadmaps appears to be a huge task, it could be mitigated by reorganising national investment priorities, addressing rampant corruption, and ensuring effectiveness, efficiency, and accountability for the usage of public resources and the delivery of services. Doing so can help free finances that can go a long way to help with funding top priorities.

Walking the walk on rooting out barriers to the achievement of Africa’s demographic dividend

It is not too late, we can salvage the opportunity to harness the demographic dividend. Stakeholders in this field have a lot of work ahead of them. Crucially, it is time to walk the walk on rooting out rampant corruption and holding leaders accountable for use of public resources. Unless African countries begin to shun corruption, the demographic dividend will remain an elusive dream, as many resources that could go a long way in addressing development challenges remain unaccounted for.



You have published quite a bit on the demographic dividend in Africa. Tell us how the demographic dividend fits as a people-centred development framework.

I think it is important to note that the dividend is not guaranteed through achieving a favourable age-structure only. This is where a “people-centred” development framework comes in. We have to plan to invest in massively improving outcomes in health, education and skills development to maximise the benefits of the change in the age structure to one with significantly more people in the working ages than dependents. Moreover, a healthy, educated and skilled population without jobs will not adequately improve the quality of lives. Therefore, we also need to create jobs that provide decent wages. Good governance and robust accountability measures are also required to facilitate these outcomes. In my view therefore, harnessing the demographic dividend requires a people-centred approach much like the vision of Armatya Sen in his work *Development as Freedom* where he argues for a broader view of economic development to encompass economic protection from abject poverty, freedom of opportunity and political freedoms and transparency.

The global development community has put in place regional and global initiatives such as the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), Africa Agenda 2063, FP2020, the International Conference on Population and Development (ICPD) 1994 Programme of Action, among others, that either directly or indirectly highlight the demographic dividend as critical to people-centred and inclusive development. Do you think these initiatives add any value to the efforts of African governments to realise the demographic dividend in their countries? Are there any gaps?

These initiatives are in fact quite important for a number of reasons. For one, they draw attention to population dynamics as major variables in development planning and achieving sustainability. To some extent, they have also provided an evidence base for informed decision making. Further, there are various linked commitments that the African nations have signed up to that serve as an accountability platform and peer review mechanism to achieve the goals envisioned in these initiatives.

There are definitely gaps and, in my view, the biggest one is the “how”. Stakeholders are still struggling with providing concrete advice on **how** the dividend can be achieved beyond the generalised recommendations. Country specific steps on policy prioritisation and well documented best practices to arrive at the demographic dividend are still lacking. Policy makers may believe in the dividend, but if we do not address the “how” in detail, then we could get stuck on the rhetoric with no action.

The influence of international and regional commitments to the realisation of the demographic dividend (DD) in Africa

We speak to Dr. Bernard Onyango, who heads the demographic dividend programme at AFIDEP, on regional and international initiatives whose aim is to provide a framework for sustainable development, what value they add to the efforts of African governments in realising the DD and what gaps remain in fulfilling the commitments made.

In 2017, African governments committed to investing in Africa’s large youthful population in order to drive countries towards harnessing a demographic dividend. In your view, is this mere rhetoric or are African governments moving these commitments into action?

Our own experience working in several countries in sub-Saharan Africa is that the governments are generally in agreement that we need to invest to harness the demographic dividend. As a result, a number of them such as Kenya, Zambia, Uganda, Rwanda, Malawi and Namibia, among others, have made efforts towards integrating the demographic dividend framework in their national (and in some cases sub-national) development planning processes. However, they are all still grappling with challenges to roll out programmes to harness the dividend. These range from evidence gaps and absence of effective maximum likelihood measurements (MLE) measures to inadequate technical and financial resources.

As countries move closer to 2030, what should the global development community do to ensure the existing gaps in achieving Agenda 2030 and other commitments made are closed, and the commitments met.

I’ll point out to several things we can do better. First is to ensure greater awareness about the goals and how to achieve them. We have to push SDGs to become the focus of popular discourse not relegated to technical expert audiences. Part of this is about synthesising the existing evidence to make a business case for the SDGs that both technical and non-technical audiences can understand and can be disseminated and used for advocacy from international to national and sub-national levels. For example, achieving the environmental and climate change goals require behaviour change at the grassroots and therefore we have to communicate effectively with local communities.

We also have to admit there are still a lot of evidence gaps to be bridged especially at sub-national level to ensure that interventions are contextualised and meet the needs of the communities. Therefore, the SDGs have to be accompanied by an evidence generation agenda. We also have to put in place strong MLE measures and document best practices to be shared to hasten the pace of successful projects. The other agenda that has to be addressed is capacity development. We have to ensure we have the required expertise to plan and implement successful programmes and in addition ensure that we develop the necessary tools to assist their work including very crucially having viable policy prioritisation tools and costed plans. This brings me to the last point, which is that we need to cultivate political commitment to attain the SDGs. Leaders will be motivated to act if we can provide compelling evidence on the issues and provide viable roadmaps to achieve the goals.

New Staff



Nyovani Madise

Director, Research and Development Policy and Head of the Malawi Office

Nyovani joined AFIDEP in February 2018. She brings a wealth of expertise and experience in research, capacity building, and policy engagement on a wide range of development issues, including population change, urbanisation, HIV/AIDS and reproductive, child, maternal, and adolescent health. In addition to leading our research programmes at AFIDEP, Nyovani leads our Malawi office, where she is based.



Martin Phiri

Senior Knowledge Translation Officer

Martin is a governance expert with over 20 years experience having performed various governance roles in different capacities in the public sector. He is a Senior Knowledge Translation Officer and the Project Manager for the Malawi Parliament Enhancement Project (MPEP).



Martin Kabutu

Finance Officer

Martin joined AFIDEP in June 2018. His current work entails developing effective finance and admin procedures, systems integration and processes flow to maximise programme impact, as well as financial management and monitoring.



Flora Elvira Okidia

Administrative Intern

Flora offers administrative support to ensure effective and efficient flow of activities and the meeting of workplace needs that enable the people she supports to focus on their core activities in order to achieve the Institute's desired strategic goals.



Victory Kamthunzi

Communications Intern

Victory provides support in managing AFIDEP's digital and print media, through generating and sharing content. She also ensures that the use of AFIDEP's various media platforms are both effective and continue to be innovative.



An audience member speaking during a science-policy café dedicated to highlighting the role of evidence in driving Kenya's development aspirations and how investments in youth can transform Kenya's socio-economic landscape. This was the first of two cafés held in January 2018 at PAWA 254 in Nairobi.

Scheaffer Okore (right), the Vice chairperson of Ukweli Party and head of programmes for civic engagement at Siasa Place - Nairobi, speaks during a panel session at the second café held at PAWA 254 on the role of media in keeping the government and other political leaders accountable. Mike Eldon, a Member of AFIDEP's Board of Directors and the facilitator for the session looks on.



Dr. Eliya Zulu, AFIDEP Executive Director, speaking at the launch of the Malawi Parliament Enhancement Project (MPEP). This is a new project intended to stimulate reforms to improve the effectiveness and impact of parliament in steering democracy, upholding good governance, and promoting socio-economic development in Malawi.

The year 2018 so far...



Participants in discussion at the African Evidence Informed Policy forum in March 2018 in Nairobi. It brought together more than two dozen Africa policy specialists to share lessons and recommendations on how best researchers, policymakers and other stakeholders can bring timely, relevant, and reliable new knowledge to have a significant influence on policy decisions in developing countries. AFIDEP's Dr. Eliya Zulu and Dr. Rose Oranje participated at the forum.



Dr. Josephine Kibaru-Mbae, the Director-General, National Council for Population and Development (NCPD) unveils a report summarising the findings of a research study on the socioeconomic implications of youth demographics in Kenya, Uganda, Tanzania and Uganda. The launch was held on 20 June 2018.



Dr. Adano Diba Kochi (R), the County Director, Preventive and Promotive Health - Marsabit County, with a participant of a June 2018 workshop to improve the knowledge and skills of county health staff to use the national reproductive, maternal, child and adolescent health (RMNCAH) scorecard. The workshop was ran by AFIDEP and the United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA) Kenya office.



Dr. Rose Oronje (R) at a training in June 2018 organised by AFIDEP and the Population Reference Bureau (PRB) for doctoral researchers from Benin, Ethiopia, Ghana, India, Kenya and Nigeria. The training focused on communicating research effectively to policymakers.



AFIDEP staff based at the Nairobi office enjoy a hearty moment during a staff happy hour in June 2018.



Recent Publications

Opportunities and Policy Actions to Maximise the Demographic Dividend in Botswana
Demographic Dividend Study Report
March 2018

UNFPA

Opportunities and Policy Actions to Maximise the Demographic Dividend in Botswana

Botswana's socio-economic development aspirations as spelt out in Vision 2036, its current long-term development strategy, is to graduate from being an upper-middle-income country (UMIC) to a high-income country (HIC) with prosperity for all. Demographic change has implications for the realisation of these ambitions. This study set out to analyse the population dynamics and age-structure changes in Botswana in the medium to long-term and the implications these will have on the ability of the country to maximise its Demographic Dividend (DD).

Making the Dividend Count: Bridging Research and Africa's Policy Processes
Wilson Center
Research Paper No. 22
March 2018

By Dana Warrin, Southern Voices Network for Peacebuilding Scholar

Africa has a large youthful population. In 2015, 19 percent of the world's 1.2 billion youth aged 15-24 years lived in Africa. By 2035, Africa's youth population of 228 million is projected to grow by 42 percent, which could have the continent lose an economic growth powerhouse by 2035. However, Africa can achieve this status only by enacting evidence-informed policies and investments that address the challenges facing its large youthful population. Although a demographic dividend can significantly boost development, the failure of African governments to provide youth with access to quality education and productive employment risks creating vulnerable human capital with disorganizing forces. Instead of becoming productive citizens youth could remain unemployed, raising their vulnerability to recruitment by violent or terrorist groups that using prospects for increased prosperity on the continent. Policymakers can minimize these risks by prioritizing the use of research to formulate policies that address the challenges facing youth across various sectors. Harnessing the demographic dividend is not just critical to ensuring that African countries achieve their socioeconomic development aspirations, but also to achieving and sustaining peace on the continent.

The demographic dividend is the accelerated economic growth resulting from improved reproductive health, a rapid decline in fertility, and the subsequent shift in population age structure. With fewer births each year, the

The Southern Voices Network for Peacebuilding (SVNP) is a coalition with networks of African policy and research organizations that works with the Africa Program to bring African analyses and perspectives to key issues in U.S.-Africa relations. Founded in 2011 with the support of the Carnegie Corporation of New York, the project provides avenues for African researchers to engage with informants and exchange perspectives with U.S. and international policymakers in order to develop the most representative, relevant, and inclusive policy frameworks for strengthening and state building in Africa.

This publication was made possible by a grant from the Carnegie Corporation of New York. The statements made and views expressed in this paper are solely the responsibility of the author and do not represent the views of the Wilson Center or the Carnegie Corporation of New York.

For more information please visit <https://www.wilsoncenter.org/article/making-the-dividend-count-bridging-research-and-africa-policy-processes>

Making the Dividend Count: Bridging Research and Africa's Policy Processes

Despite this high-level expression of commitment, policymakers still need to do more to integrate demographic dividend research into their country's policymaking processes. Drawing on the experiences of expert engagements with policymakers in Uganda, Malawi, and Kenya this paper outlines how experts have effectively communicated demographic dividend research to government officials, who in turn, incorporated these results into policies. While these interactions are still a work in progress, they provide lessons on how experts can more effectively communicate research with policymakers.

EAST AFRICAN REGIONAL ANALYSIS OF YOUTH DEMOGRAPHICS
AFIDEP
African Institute for Development Policy
Building Evidence, Informing Research
University of Southampton
UKAID
E.A.R.F. EAST AFRICA RESEARCH FUND

East African Regional Analysis of Youth Demographics

This report summarises the findings of research on the socioeconomic implications of youth demographics in the four East African Community (EAC) countries. It also poses recommendations that bring together evidence from reviewed literature, data, and scenario models to highlight the policy and implementation implications needed for each of the four countries, and for the region as a whole, to benefit from the youth bulge.

These publications are available on the AFIDEP website: <https://www.afiddep.org/resource-centre/downloads/research-reports/>

Related Blogs



African governments should come of age and take charge of their development priorities

Even as we acknowledge the myriad of challenges inherent in most African countries, a lot more can be achieved by reorganisation of investment priorities, and much more by addressing rampant corruption, and ensuring effectiveness, efficiency, and accountability in use of public resources and delivery of services.



The place of evidence in legislative processes at the county level in Kenya

The Kenya government has made four issues: healthcare, food security, affordable housing and industrialisation, the main development agenda. The 'Big Four' Agenda aside, just how evidence-informed are the decisions that both the national and county governments are making? And how much do decision-makers appreciate the role of evidence as they undertake their mandates?



Can evidence fix Africa's governance challenges, or are we flogging a dead horse?

Despite the high-level interest in the demographic dividend, poor governance continues on much of the continent, including the loss of public funds meant to benefit citizens. The sticking point here is that these are challenges countries have struggled with for decades. The tools for improving governance are in place, both at continental and country level. But why are we not progressing?

Kenya's 'Big Four' agenda

Continued from back page



Photo: Axel Fassio/CIFOR

Food security: Kenya is far from being food secure, which is why boosting food security is one of the pillars of the Big Four agenda, to ensure that all Kenyans are well fed

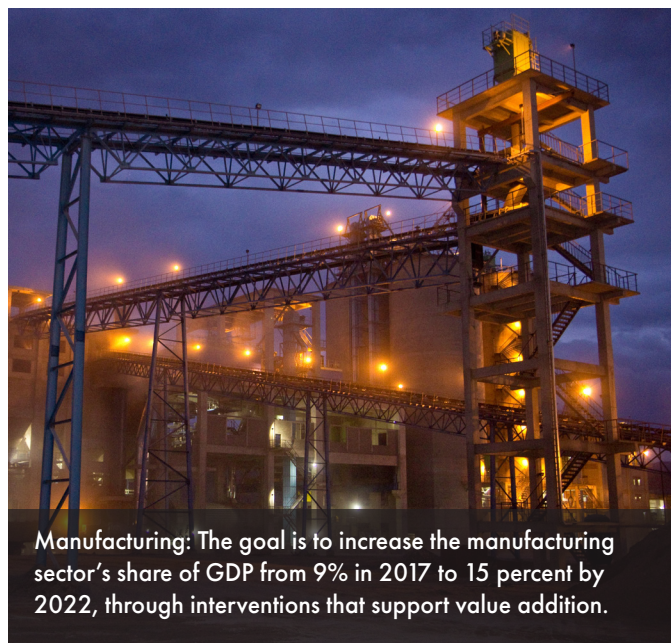


Photo: Simon Davis/DFID

Manufacturing: The goal is to increase the manufacturing sector's share of GDP from 9% in 2017 to 15 percent by 2022, through interventions that support value addition.

The budget question

The priorities of the 'Big Four' Agenda are quite resource intensive and have been embedded in the Third Medium Term Plan (MTP III) 2018-2022 of the Kenya Vision 2030. As such, the 2018 Budget Policy Statement (BPS) published by the National Treasury acknowledges the impending financial burden. The BPS therefore outlines measures such as partnership with the private sector through Public Private Partnerships in order to meet the set goals and objectives. The National Treasury also cites 'gradually reducing' non-priority expenditures. Despite the existing efforts to bridge the financial gap, a problematic reality is that about 85 percent of the annual budget is allocated to the national government while 15 percent is allocated to county governments, which curtails implementation efforts, as much of the work is taking place at the county level.

At county level, discussions at the Legislative Summit revealed that the current budgets for counties have not been realigned to the 'Big Four' Agenda and this will be done in the budgets for next financial year. This poses a challenge in how counties shall implement the set priorities without coherent budgetary provisions. However, as indicated by Sen. Mahamud, nothing stops counties from undertaking some of the functions towards the realisation of the 'Big Four' using existing resources. In addition to budget realignment, the CIDPs will have to be realigned with the 'Big Four'.

Delivering on the promises

As noted earlier, the second term of the devolution system of government does not have room for detractions. Kenyans cannot afford it anyway. County governments therefore need to roll up their sleeves and get to work. The national government should ensure county governments have the tools to deliver on the promises of the 'Big Four'. This means capacity gaps in legislation, budgeting and other critical areas should be plugged urgently. CIDPs should also be realigned to the 'Big Four' without further delay, failure to which the priorities will only look good on paper, but nothing on the ground. Finally, caution should be taken not to overlook and undermine other critical sectors such as education, tourism, trade, infrastructure, and so forth, while in pursuit of the 'Big Four'.

Universal Health Coverage (UHC): Healthcare coverage in Kenya currently stands at 38 percent, meaning not every Kenyan has access to healthcare. The government thus hopes to improve the National Hospital Insurance Fund (NHIF) and reforming the governance of private insurance companies to bring the cost of healthcare coverage within the reach of the average Kenyan.



Photo: Direct Relief/Flickr



Kenya's 'Big Four' agenda

Just how will the country's national and county governments work together for success?

By Diana Warira

Following the 2017 General Election, Kenya is now witnessing the second term of a devolved system of government, which was enacted by the 2010 Constitution of Kenya. The first term was characterised by several challenges including constant wrangles between Governors, Senators and members of county assemblies (MCAs) in seeming power struggles and alleged misappropriation of funds at the county level. Some Kenyans have even joked that in an attempt to devolve governance, we instead devolved corruption.

Interestingly, the county government leadership has owned up to the fact that their first term was more about setting up structures and finding their footing. With the second term, it is now time for them to deliver on projects and improve the lives of their people.

During the 2018 Legislative Summit convened by the Senate and the County Assembly Forum between 22-24 May in Mombasa County, national government representatives, Senators, MCAs, other government officials, development agencies and civil society organisations deliberated various issues of importance to the country's development.

Top on the discussion list was how the national and county governments will collaborate in delivering on the promise of the 'Big Four' Agenda - a brainchild of the current national government. The 'Big Four' priority areas as announced by President Kenyatta in December 2017 are investments in Universal Health Coverage (UHC) to ensure access to quality and affordable healthcare for all Kenyans; quality and affordable housing; food security to ensure all Kenyans are well fed; and industrialisation to promote value addition to products, whilst creating employment opportunities for the country's working-age population, by 2022.

Quality and affordable housing: This component of the plan is meant to enable the working class and low income earners in business to own homes by reducing initial deposits and having extended repayment periods.

Collaboration is key

As noted by the Presidency on several occasions, the national government is seeking to partner with county governments and the private sector to achieve the 'Big Four' Agenda, more so due to the resource-intensive nature of the investments needed to achieve the set priorities. Speaking at the Legislative Summit, the Governor of Uasin Gishu County, H.E. Jackson Mandago pointed out that the national government cannot succeed in achieving the 'Big Four' without involving counties, and so far, there has been good synergy between both levels of government. He, however, cautioned that there is need for legislation to implement some of the key actions towards realisation of the 'Big Four' priorities.

The greatest benefit of devolution is that county governments can now tailor local development investments to the needs of the people. As such, the Cabinet Secretary, National Treasury, Mr. Henry Rotich, urged county assemblies to define priorities aligned with the 'Big Four' Agenda. This will ensure that county governments are in sync with efforts at the national level. Specifically, county assemblies need to ensure that the County Integrated Development Plans (CIDPs) align with 'Big Four' priorities.

Further, in order to facilitate smooth collaboration between the national and county governments, there is need to close the current capacity gaps among those charged with key functions such as developing legislation and budgeting. Sen. Mahamud Mohamed Maalim, the Chairperson, Standing Committee on Finance and Budget, emphasised this need, as county governments cannot run effectively if the existing capacity gaps prevail.

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